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Manpower and Organization

**THE AIR FORCE INNOVATIVE
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EMPLOYEE
AWARENESS (IDEA) PROGRAM**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This instruction, (AFI) implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 38-4, *The Innovative Development Through Employee Awareness (IDEA) Program* and Department of Defense (DoD) 1400.25-M, *DoD Civilian Personnel Manual, Subchapter 451, Awards*. It gives the directive requirements for the Air Force IDEA Program. It does not apply to Air National Guard (ANG) Title 32 military members or National Guard technicians employed under Title 32, United States Code (U.S.C.) 709. Awards are based on the merits of the contribution and benefits, without regard to grade or rank, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, physical handicap, age, political affiliation, or union membership affiliation or participation. Proposed supplements must be recommended for approval by the Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency (AFMIA), and approved by Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs (HQ USAF/XP). Under AFI 33-360V1, *Publications Management Program*, supplements will not change the intent of the governing directive. See **attachment 1** for a glossary of terms. The use of the name or mark of any specific manufacturer, commercial product, commodity, or service in this publication does not imply endorsement by the Air Force.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This instruction aligns with AFPD 38-4, *The Innovative Development through Employee Awareness (IDEA) Program*. This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.

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Chapter 1

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

1.1. Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. The Secretary of the Air Force delegates authority for program administration to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Directorate of Manpower and Organization (HQ USAF/XPM) carries out this responsibility.

1.2. HQ USAF/XP/XPM:

1.2.1. Develops and coordinates program policy with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) (Force Management Policy) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Incentive Awards Division.

1.2.2. Performs program oversight.

1.2.3. Provides metrics and trends to senior leaders as required.

1.2.4. Approves program changes and supplements to AFI 38-401, *The Air Force Innovative Development through Employee Awareness (IDEA) Program*.

1.2.5. Approves selection of the Air Force Exceptional Innovator of the Year.

1.2.6. Requests periodic program review by AF Audit Agency to evaluate program effectiveness, including validity of savings realized, awards paid, and verification of idea implementation.

1.3. AFMIA:

1.3.1. Manages Air Force-level recognition programs.

1.3.2. Manages the IDEA Program Data System (IPDS) at the Air Force level.

1.3.2.1. Provides technical guidance and support.

1.3.2.2. Designs reports.

1.3.2.3. Coordinates with technical staff on enhancements to program.

1.3.3. Markets program.

1.3.4. Develops and conducts training.

1.3.5. Reports metrics and analyzes statistics.

1.3.6. Acts as focal point for all high-level inquiries.

1.3.7. Processes Air Force ideas requiring evaluation by other Federal Agencies.

1.3.8. Processes other Federal Agency ideas requiring Air Force evaluation.

1.3.9. Manually tracks savings and awards for Air Force ideas evaluated by other DoD and Non-DoD agencies.

1.3.10. Prorates awards and obtains fund citations from other DoD and Non-DoD agencies.

1.3.11. Reviews and recommends approval or disapproval of supplements to AFI 38-401.

1.3.12. Processes data system corrections to submissions/evaluations upon receipt of request from MAJCOMs.

1.3.13. Upon approval of the Air Force Exceptional Innovator of the Year winner, funds and obtains plaques for presentation, and prepares appropriate letters and certificates.

1.4. Major Command (MAJCOM), Field Operating Agency (FOA), and Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) Commanders:

1.4.1. Ensure offices as directed by AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization* and AFP 38-102, *Headquarters, United States Air Force Organization and Functions* (Chartbook), administer the IDEA Program.

1.4.2. Adjudicate disagreements that arise in administering the IDEA Program.

1.5. MAJCOM/FOA/DRU and Base Manpower and Organization (MO) Offices:

1.5.1. Administers program requirements in paragraphs **1.5.2.** through **1.5.21.**

1.5.2. Interprets policy and administers the IDEA Program for commands and bases. (See **chapter 6**).

1.5.3. Recommends appropriate supplements, policies, and plans.

1.5.4. Provides support for alternate processing of ideas (e.g., individuals without access to IPDS, submitters not in the Personnel Data System, classified ideas, and nondisclosure of Social Security Number (SSN) etc.).

1.5.5. Performs staff assistance visits.

1.5.6. Conducts training on the use of IPDS and administration of the IDEA Program.

1.5.7. Markets program.

1.5.8. Develops an annual budget to support program requirements.

1.5.9. Resolves disputed cases and reports decisions to management.

1.5.10. Responds to high-level inquiries and audits.

1.5.11. Provides recommendations and instructions to accomplish transition of local IDEA Programs during base closure actions.

1.5.12. Reviews and maintains a copy of Service Agreements (Memoranda of Agreement or Memoranda of Understanding (MOA or MOU)) to ensure the IDEA Program is addressed.

1.5.13. Processes other Federal Agency ideas sent from AFMIA for evaluation.

1.5.14. Manages local recognition programs and supports Air Force-level recognition programs.

1.5.15. Reports standard metrics to commanders.

1.5.16. Processes award payments for inventions, patents, and alternately processed ideas.

1.5.17. Tracks submission and evaluation in IPDS (para **6.3.1.**). Updates queries and tracks IPDS actions (e.g., submission evaluations, overdues).

1.5.18. Assists in processing requests for reconsideration.

1.5.19. Ensures Unit POC listings in IPDS are updated, as required.

1.5.20. Forwards requests to AFMIA to correct input.

1.5.21. Acts as technical advisor to IDEA Awards Committee, if applicable.

1.5.22. Ensures management validates accuracy of tangible savings reported by evaluators and resultant awards.

1.6. Tenant Activities:

1.6.1. Ensures MOA or MOU addresses the IDEA Program, including funding of awards. OPR ensures the agreement is coordinated with the local MO office.

1.6.2. Follows IDEA Program procedures.

1.6.3. Develops an annual budget for monetary military awards and other program requirements.

1.6.4. Responds to high-level inquiries.

1.6.5. Designates or appoints a unit POC.

1.7. Installation Commanders:

1.7.1. Budgets for Military Awards Air Force Element of Expense 598.

1.7.2. Ensures IDEA awards are paid promptly and in accordance with awards scales in this instruction.

1.7.3. Ensures offices as directed by AFI 38-101 and AFI 38-102 administer the IDEA Program.

1.7.4. Ensures approved ideas are implemented.

1.7.5. Designates certifying officer.

1.7.6. Designates or appoints a unit POC.

1.7.7. Establishes methodology to validate tangible savings reported by evaluators.

1.8. IDEA Awards Committee. May be established at installation commander's discretion to validate tangible savings and recommend Air Force Exceptional Innovator of the Year Award. The committee will include a chairperson, alternate chairperson, military and civilian members from major functional areas, nonvoting technical advisors (as required), and MO representative who will serve as the executive secretary.

1.9. Unit Point of Contact (POC):

1.9.1. Determines organizational functional evaluator, ensures ideas are evaluated, benefits are determined and, if applicable, manpower savings are documented.

1.9.2. Tracks implementation of approved ideas and updates IPDS.

1.9.3. Prints certificates and arranges for presentation to recipients of nonmonetary recognition.

1.9.4. Forwards requests to base MO office to correct errors on submissions after transmittal to database. **NOTE:** Request must be made prior to initial evaluation.

1.9.5. Updates unit strength to IPDS within first five working days of each month.

1.9.6. Prepares management reports for organizational oversight of program.

1.9.7. Advises supervisors and evaluators as needed.

1.10. Submitters:

1.10.1. *Prior to submission*, check IDEA Pool for duplicates.

1.10.2. If not duplicate, enter IPDS and acknowledge program rules prior to submission of idea.

1.10.3. Submit ideas with problem, well-developed solution, and expected benefits.

1.10.4. Forwards request for correction to submission to unit POC. **NOTE:** Request must be submitted prior to first evaluation.

1.10.5. Obtains status of their ideas through the on-line system or, for ideas submitted manually, through the MO office.

1.10.6. Keeps personal data current through IPDS or MO office. Subject data is used for notification and award actions.

1.10.7. Withdraw ideas (See paragraph **3.6.** of this instruction for process).

1.11. Reporting Official or Supervisor:

1.11.1. Encourages employees to participate in the program and, if requested, assists in the development of ideas whenever possible.

1.11.2. Determines idea eligibility.

1.11.3. Ensures multiple AFTO Forms 22, **Technical Order Improvement Report and Reply**, or AFTO Forms 135, **Source, Maintenance and Recoverability Code Change Report**, that are related to the same improvement are consolidated and processed as a single confirmatory idea.

1.11.4. Checks IDEA Pool for duplicates.

1.11.5. Determines submitter's job responsibility status—See **attachment 7** of this instruction.

1.11.6. Determines eligibility of submitter's request for withdrawal of the idea.

1.11.7. Processes request for withdrawal on the evaluation screen of IPDS. Indicates the reason as "withdrawal" with an explanation in the text.

1.11.8. Ensures recognition at appropriate ceremonies.

1.12. First-Level Evaluator:

1.12.1. Checks IDEA Pool for duplicates.

1.12.2. Evaluates ideas, determines benefits and, if applicable, documents manpower savings.

1.12.3. If approving OPR, implements approved ideas and updates IPDS upon implementation.

1.12.4. If approving OPR, responds to requests for status of ideas pending implementation.

1.12.5. Processes request for withdrawal on the evaluation screen of IPDS. Indicates the reason as "withdrawal" with an explanation in the text.

1.12.6. Responds to high-level inquiries.

1.12.7. Updates IPDS as required.

1.13. Second or Third-Level Evaluator:

1.13.1. Evaluates ideas, determines benefits and, if applicable, documents manpower savings.

1.13.2. If approving OPR, implements approved ideas and updates IPDS upon implementation.

1.13.3. If approving OPR, responds to requests for status of ideas pending implementation.

1.13.4. Responds to high-level inquiries.

1.13.5. Updates IPDS as required.

1.14. Second-Level Supervisor of Submitter. Determines Job Responsibility on submitter ONLY if the reconsideration is on the Job Responsibility Determination.

1.15. Certifying Officer. Ensures funds availability and forwards to disbursing official.

1.16. Disbursing Official. Authorizes disbursement of funds and forwards to the Defense Finance Accounting System for award payment.

1.17. All Air Force Employees. Regularly access IDEA Pool for ideas applicable to their area of responsibility.

Chapter 2

IDEA PROGRAM DATA SYSTEM (IPDS)

2.1. IPDS. IPDS is an automated system designed to provide all Air Force users access from any Air Force desktop computer. Through IPDS, ideas can be submitted and evaluated and individuals recognized for their approved ideas. Individuals can access IPDS at the following uniform resource locator (URL) (address): <https://ideas.satx.disa.mil>.

2.2. Roles of IPDS Users:

2.2.1. Submitters. After a submitter enters IPDS, follow the prompts inputting the requested information and complete the submission screen. Once completed and the done key is pressed, the submitter is given an idea control number. The submitter uses the idea control number to obtain status of their idea at any time through IPDS.

2.2.2. Reporting Officials or Supervisors. The reporting official or supervisor is notified via electronic mail that an idea has been submitted by a subordinate and is pending their action. After the reporting official or supervisor enters IPDS, follow the prompts determining eligibility of the idea and job responsibility. See paragraphs 3.2. and 3.4. of this instruction. When the reporting official or supervisor has completed the steps outlined in paragraph 4.8., the idea is forwarded electronically for the next required action.

2.2.3. Evaluators. The evaluator is notified via electronic mail that an idea is pending evaluation. After the evaluator enters IPDS, follow the prompts inputting the requested information, and complete the evaluation screen. When the evaluator has completed the steps outlined in paragraphs 4.9., 4.10., and 4.11., the idea is forwarded electronically for the next required action.

2.2.4. Validating and Certifying Officials. The MO Office is notified via electronic mail that an idea has been approved, requires validation of tangible savings and a fund cite. MO Office will be the focal point for obtaining functional OPR validation of projected savings before final approval of award. After validation, the certifying official enters IPDS and follows the prompts, inputting validated savings and fund cite to complete the award screen. The information entered by the certifying official is electronically forwarded to the local disbursing official (Finance Officer) for action.

2.2.5. Disbursing Officials. The disbursing official is notified via electronic mail that an idea has been approved, fund cite provided, and requires payment authorization. After the disbursing official enters IPDS, follow the prompts inputting the payment authorization information. The information entered by the disbursing official is electronically forwarded to the appropriate payment system.

2.2.6. Unit Points of Contact (POC). The submitter's and evaluator's unit POCs are notified via electronic mail of actions taken on ideas. Unit POCs are responsible for basic unit-level system administration (e.g., monitors IPDS mail, updates unit assigned strength and POC information, and trains unit personnel).

2.2.7. MO Offices. The submitter's local MO office is notified via electronic mail of actions taken on ideas. MO officials are responsible for monitoring IPDS and basic system administration (e.g., inputs initial unit assigned strength, establishes and maintains unit POC information, runs ad hoc reports, trains base and MAJCOM personnel).

2.3. IDEA Pool. A centralized pool incorporating all approved ideas is accessible to Air Force personnel. Idea submissions and evaluations are transferred to the IDEA Pool upon final approval. Approved ideas are purged from IPDS 18 months after the actual implementation date. If no actual implementation dates are entered, approved ideas purge from IPDS 18 months after the projected implementation date.

2.4. IDEA Pool Users.

2.4.1. Submitters will check the IDEA Pool to determine if their ideas duplicate one already approved. See paragraph [4.2.](#) of this instruction.

2.4.2. Evaluators will check the IDEA Pool to determine if an idea pending evaluation duplicates one already approved. See paragraph [4.2.](#) of this instruction.

2.4.3. Air Force employees should regularly review approved ideas for possible application at their installations.

2.5. Extracting Data from IDEA Pool.

2.5.1. Users of IPDS may extract data from the IDEA Pool by entering key words associated with a subject identifier or a subject area. See [attachment 3](#) and [attachment 4](#) of this instruction.

2.5.2. IPDS will select ideas that contain key words in the text of the idea and display the idea number and subject. Text of an idea may be displayed on request.

2.6. Adopting Ideas from IDEA Pool. Ideas extracted from the IDEA Pool may be adopted, as appropriate, by any installation. No award will be paid for these ideas.

Chapter 3

ELIGIBILITY, SUBMISSIONS, AND RECONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Idea Eligibility Criteria. To be eligible, an idea:

- 3.1.1. Must be the submitter's own thought or a new application of an old principle.
- 3.1.2. Must be submitted with the intent to benefit the United States Government.
- 3.1.3. Must outline a specific area for improvement, state a workable solution, and incorporate expected benefits.
- 3.1.4. Must be an "approved" AFTO Form 22 or AFTO Form 135.
- 3.1.5. May be within submitter's job responsibility.
- 3.1.6. May be a patented idea, invention, or scientific achievement.

3.2. Idea Ineligibility Criteria. Ideas in the IDEA Pool are ineligible for submission. Other ineligibility criteria are listed on AF Form 1000A, **IDEA INSTRUCTIONS AND INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**, in the IPDS automated system, and below. Specifically, an idea is ineligible if it:

- 3.2.1. Is vague, incomplete, or deals with generalities or opinions.
- 3.2.2. Appears to be a personal complaint or criticism.
- 3.2.3. Proposes a stock-listed item be used for its intended purpose.
- 3.2.4. Recommends the enforcement of an existing law, regulation, directive, instruction, or procedure unless it causes corrective action.
- 3.2.5. Calls attention to obvious printing errors which do not cause serious misinterpretation, and which will normally be corrected at the next printing.
- 3.2.6. Proposes a change in housekeeping practices or routine maintenance.
- 3.2.7. Recommends a study be conducted or a tool designed, without specific proposal for improvement.
- 3.2.8. Proposes changes to off-the-job activities in community affairs, including charities, public and private education, scouting, church and athletic programs.
- 3.2.9. Offers ideas or designs for posters, slogans, contests, advertising or promotional material.
- 3.2.10. Benefits an Air Force contractor with no benefit to the United States Government.
- 3.2.11. Recommends improvements to non-appropriated fund activities.
- 3.2.12. Proposes improvements to non-governmental activities, including banks and credit unions.
- 3.2.13. Covers routine operations, including requesting supply items, office equipment, and telephone services.
- 3.2.14. Proposes force structure issues, including major systems acquisitions.

3.2.15. Recommends that a form be developed, revised, or changed without specific proposal for operational improvement, if it entails study of all forms, or if it results from new technology. See exclusions in AFI 33-360 Vol 2, *Forms Management Program*.

3.2.16. Proposes realignment of text or an addition of a word when there has been no serious misunderstanding or error reported.

3.2.17. Has been determined not to be the submitter's own idea.

3.2.18. Benefits submitter in a personal way.

3.2.19. Is not an approved AFTO Form 22 or AFTO Form 135.

3.2.20. Has "correction" marked on AFTO Form 22.

3.3. Responsibility for Idea Eligibility Determination. The reporting official or supervisor determines if an idea is eligible.

3.4. Determining Job Responsibility:

3.4.1. The reporting official or supervisor is responsible for making this determination. See definition in paragraph 4.7.

3.4.2. If submitter disagrees with the determination, a request for reconsideration may be submitted in accordance with paragraph 3.18.

3.5. Submitting Ideas. Any individual, team, or group may submit ideas. Anonymous ideas will not be accepted. For submission of confirmatory and after-the-fact ideas, see paragraphs 3.9. and 3.10.

3.5.1. Submitters should have the following information available prior to initiating the submission: Supervisor's name, office symbol, telephone number, and e-mail address.

3.5.2. Ideas must:

3.5.2.1. Be submitted in English.

3.5.2.2. Be submitted *electronically* if capability exists. If capability does not exist or if user has no e-mail address, instructions for alternate submission will be followed. See [attachment 2](#) of this instruction.

3.5.2.3. Be clearly titled to allow effective search of the IDEA Pool.

3.5.2.4. State the current practice, method, procedure, task, directive, or policy.

3.5.2.5. Explain the problem with the current practice or why it should be changed.

3.5.2.6. Provide a detailed description or solution on how to change the current practice or implement the idea. **NOTE:** Ideas must include specific recommendations, not merely thoughts or opinions.

3.5.2.7. Indicate where the idea can be used and the estimated benefits to the government.

3.5.3. Submitter must provide their SSN to receive a monetary award. However, a monetary award may be declined if an individual wishes to submit an idea but not provide his/her SSN.

3.5.4. Supporting documentation, including outlines for studies, courses, or similar actions, may be attached.

3.5.5. If an idea contains classified information, follow the procedures in Department of Defense (DoD) Regulation 5200-1.R., *Information Security Program Regulation* and Air Force Instruction 31-401, *Information Security Program Management*, or any documents that supersede them. If there is *any* doubt, contact your unit security officer.

3.6. Withdrawing Ideas:

3.6.1. Submitter must submit a written request to the reporting official or supervisor or evaluator. To be eligible for withdrawal, request must be submitted *prior* to the final approval or disapproval.

3.6.2. After determining the request is eligible, the reporting official, supervisor or evaluator will process the request by entering “withdrawal” on the evaluation screen of IPDS. Indicate the reason for withdrawal with an explanation in the text. The written request for withdrawal will be maintained by the reporting official/supervisor or evaluator for one year after final action. IPDS will notify the submitter that the idea has been withdrawn.

3.6.3. Submitter relinquishes ownership of the idea when the reporting official or supervisor approves the request to withdraw.

3.7. Group or Team Ideas. For ideas that result from a group or team effort, all members of the team will be identified and recognized appropriately.

3.7.1. There is no limit to the number of co-submitters.

3.7.2. The group must designate one individual as the primary submitter.

3.7.3. The primary submitter enters idea into IPDS, listing each co-submitter’s name and required information. **NOTE:** All co-submitters must be input at the same time as the primary submitter’s initial input. Additional co-submitters *cannot* be added at a later date.

3.7.4. Individuals electing not to authorize release of their SSNs will not be considered a member of the team and will not be entered into IPDS. Individuals not entered into IPDS will not share in monetary awards.

3.8. Separate Improvement Process (SIP) Ideas. SIP ideas will be submitted as confirmatory or after-the-fact. See paragraphs 3.9. and 3.10. If neither readily apparent nor already stated on the SIP document, the reporting official or supervisor must contact the SIP approval authority for guidance on whether the SIP is an actual *improvement* or simply a *correction*. *Corrections* are not eligible for submissions into the IDEA Program. Ideas that require a SIP to implement will be closed as a disapproval and returned to the submitter for completion of the SIP. Once the SIP form is approved as an improvement, the SIP may be submitted into IPDS as a confirmatory or after-the-fact idea. **Eligibility criteria for a monetary award for an approved SIP is determined by the date of submission into the Air Force IDEA Program.**

3.8.1. Approved AFTO Forms 22 and AFTO Forms 135 meet the requirements for confirmatory ideas and will be accepted into the IDEA Program.

3.8.2. Other SIP ideas will be accepted as after-the-fact, stand-alone, or in conjunction with an idea, until such time as they meet the criteria for confirmatory ideas.

3.8.3. For specific processing instructions on individual SIP documents, refer to the appropriate governing directive (e.g., T.O. 00-5-1 for AFTO Form 22).

3.8.4. SIP documents do not establish ownership in the IDEA Program; ownership is established only when the approved SIP is submitted as an idea.

3.8.5. Job responsibility is determined by submitter's reporting official or supervisor and is based on the submitter's position at the time of idea submission, not the position occupied at the time of SIP submission. **NOTE:** If the submitter feels the job responsibility determination (JRD) has been incorrectly determined, a request for reconsideration of the JRD may be requested after final action on the idea.

3.9. Confirmatory Ideas. Ideas resulting from approved SIP documents that establish ownership and identify tangible savings and or intangible benefits on the form.

3.9.1. How to submit confirmatory ideas:

3.9.1.1. Approved SIP forms may be attached to an AF Form 1000, Idea Application, or input into IPDS for recognition through the IDEA Program. All issues must be resolved **before** submitting the approved SIP into IPDS. The AF Form 1000 or IPDS input must be submitted within 30 days of date of notification of SIP approval. These documents will be presented to the submitter's reporting official or supervisor, who will determine idea eligibility and job responsibility determination.

3.9.1.2. Since ownership (signed by initiator) and benefits have already been determined, no further evaluation, AF Form 1000-1, is required. The SIP evaluator in accordance with AFM 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule* (Table 36.34), Suggestion Program, will retain back-up documentation for benefits determination.

3.9.1.3. Submissions must be titled appropriately to facilitate research in the IDEA Pool. For example, an AFTO Form 22 idea must be titled "AFTO Form 22 – [subject of AFTO Form 22]", e.g., "AFTO Form 22 – B-52 Cockpit Lighting."

3.10. After-the-Fact Ideas. Ideas which are presented formally or informally to management prior to submission of an AF Form 1000 or input into IPDS. They include, but are not limited to, SIP documents that do not establish ownership in the IDEA Program or identify tangible savings or intangible benefits on the form.

3.10.1. Submitting After-the-Fact Ideas.

3.10.1.1. An AF Form 1000 or IPDS input may be submitted for evaluation, determination of savings and/or benefits, and recognition through the IDEA Program.

3.10.1.2. For ideas presented verbally or in writing, but not through a SIP, the AF Form 1000 or IPDS input must be submitted within 30 days of presentation of the idea. The submitter must describe how the idea was originally presented, when and to whom, in the IPDS submission or attached to AF Form 1000.

3.10.1.3. The primary submitter will present a copy of the approved SIP (other than confirmatory SIPs) to the first-level supervisor, who will determine idea eligibility and job responsibility determination. SIP documents that do not establish ownership must be submitted within 30 days of approval of the SIP.

3.10.1.4. Stand Alone Ideas. Ideas that require a SIP to implement, will be closed as disapproved and returned to the submitter for completion of the SIP form. Once the SIP is approved as an improvement, the SIP may be submitted into IPDS as a confirmatory or after-the-fact idea.

3.11. Retaining Ownership Rights.

3.11.1. Ownership is determined by the first idea to reach the final approval authority.

3.11.2. The submitter retains ownership of an idea for one year after final approval or disapproval action.

3.12. Scientific Achievement Eligibility Criteria. The scientific or technological achievement must be based on an act, deed, or accomplishment and meet one or more of the following criteria:

3.12.1. Establishes scientific or technological basis for improvements of military or other national significance.

3.12.2. Is of such quality and effectiveness that it materially advances the research and development of a government activity, group, project, or service to the public.

3.12.3. Contributes materially to the welfare of the Armed Services.

3.12.4. An article published in a nationally recognized scientific publication (for example, *Abstract of New Technology*) that substantially contributes to scientific knowledge.

3.12.5. A technical paper presented to a professional society that substantially contributes to scientific knowledge.

3.12.6. Nominations based upon in-house reports or memos are not eligible for processing as Scientific Achievements. However, they may qualify for recognition as a special achievement under the *Incentive Awards Program* or may be included as part of an individual's annual appraisal.

3.12.7. Job responsibility is not an issue for scientific achievements.

3.13. Submitting Scientific Achievements. Submit scientific achievements through the IDEA Program within ninety days after the specific presentation or date of publication, but not both. The submitter will enter their personal information into IPDS, indicate this is a Scientific Achievement and forward to the reporting official or supervisor.

3.13.1. To ensure verification of the achievement, the submitter will provide the reporting official or supervisor a copy of the article or, if it is too voluminous, the cover page showing the actual name of the publication and the publication date.

3.13.2. If the article was presented at a professional society, the nomination should include the name of the society, date of presentation, and a copy of the itinerary of the proceedings to verify presentation.

3.13.3. Once the above are completed, the reporting official or supervisor will enter IPDS. A Scientific Achievement does not require a job responsibility determination. The reporting official or supervisor will indicate "I can evaluate" at the bottom of the IPDS screen. A Scientific Achievement does not require an evaluation so the text of the evaluation will state "This results from an approved scientific achievement – no further explanation is required." The idea is then forwarded to the certifying official for award approval.

3.13.4. The award for a scientific achievement, either presentation or publication, is based on intangible benefits.

3.14. Inventions and Patents Eligibility Criteria.

3.14.1. An invention is a discovery. A patent may be obtained on an invention that is a new and useful process, machine manufacture, or composition of matter; a new and useful improvement thereof; an asexually reproduced, distinct, and new variety of plant other than a tuber-propagated plant or a plant found in any uncultivated state; or any new, original, and ornamental design for an article of manufacture.

3.14.2. As an alternative to a patent, a Statutory Invention Registration (SIR) may be obtained in accordance with AFI 51-303, *Intellectual Property--Patents, Patent Related Matters, Trademarks, and Copyrights*.

3.14.3. Air Force military members and civilian employees are required to report, in writing, inventions made by them. The inventors also need to state whether they desire the Air Force to process the invention for patenting or for the Air Force to determine the legal rights of the inventor and the government according to AFI 51-303.

3.14.4. Air Force policy encourages military and civilian personnel to use their inventive talents and to obtain patents on inventions considered of value to the Air Force. Executive Order (EO) 10096, amended by EO 10930, forms the basis for determining the respective rights of the government and the inventor in inventions made by government employees. In certain instances, an inventor may retain partial or complete rights to his or her invention. However, acceptance by an Air Force inventor of a monetary award authorized under this directive constitutes an agreement that government use of the invention will form the basis for no further claim of any nature upon the government.

3.14.5. When an invention described in a printed publication is used publicly, or an article embodying the invention is on sale for more than one year before the filing of an application for a patent or SIR, law commonly refers to it as a "statutory bar." Therefore, to protect the rights of the government and the inventor, the responsible official will promptly forward any idea or other contribution that appears to be an invention for review and processing in accordance with AFI 51-303.

3.15. Processing Inventions and Patents.

3.15.1. An invention will not be accepted as an idea until it has been processed by: Air Force Materiel Command legal office/JAG (AFMC LO/JAZ); Air Force Materiel Command legal office/Electronic System Center/JAG (ESC/JAG); Air Force Materiel Command legal office/Human System Wing/JAG (HSW/JA); Air Force Materiel Command/377 Air Base Wing JAG (377 ABW/JANO); Air Force Materiel Command legal office/Rome Laboratory/JAG (RL/JA), and award payment has been determined for the invention. If an individual wishes to submit an invention, the submitter will be directed to the installation-level servicing legal office patent counsel.

3.15.1.1. Completion of AF Form 1279, **Disclosure and Record of Invention**, and AF Form 1280, **Invention Rights Questionnaire**, are required, and may be obtained from the installation level servicing legal office patent counsel.

3.15.1.2. Inventions submitted by individuals located at Wright-Patterson AFB OH are referred to the servicing legal office patent counsel, AFMC LA/JAZ, 2240 B Street, Room 100, Wright-Patterson AFB OH 45433-7109.

3.15.1.3. Inventions submitted by individuals located at Hanscom AFB MA are referred to the Chief, Intellectual Property Division, ESC/JAZ, 40 Wright Street, Building 1120, Hanscom AFB MA 01731-2903.

3.15.1.4. The servicing legal office patent counsel processes each invention in accordance with AFI 51-303, and then recommends the following to AFMIA:

3.15.1.4.1. An application award of \$100 to each inventor under the following circumstances:

3.15.1.4.2. After an application for a patent or SIR is filed on the invention, when the invention was made under circumstances that give the government at least a license under the invention according to EO 10096, amended by EO 10930.

3.15.2. When an inventor voluntarily consents to grant a nonexclusive, irrevocable, and royalty-free license on the invention to the government with power to grant licenses for all government purposes.

3.15.3. A patent or SIR award of \$300 (to be shared equally when the invention is made by two or more eligible joint inventors), upon the issuance of a patent or SIR covering the evaluated invention. When notice of allowability is issued by the US Patent and Trademark Office in an application covering such invention on which a Secretary Order is outstanding. In the latter event, no additional invention award is made upon the issuance of a patent or SIR.

3.15.4. AFMIA will input the invention or patent information into IPDS, and as part of the notification process will forward for appropriate award payment action to the specific installation certifying and disbursing officials for finalization.

3.15.4.1. When an inventor accepts an award, the inventor agrees the use of the invention by the United States Government shall not form the basis of further claim of any nature upon the government.

3.15.4.2. The acceptance of an invention award does not preclude the consideration of an award for an idea or a scientific achievement.

3.16. Submitting Ideas on Air Force Uniforms. (Refer to AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*.) Ideas must:

3.16.1. Meet all the following criteria:

3.16.1.1. Be a new idea.

3.16.1.2. Not have been reviewed by a previous board. Evaluators must review minutes of previous boards to determine this.

3.16.1.3. Be recommended for approval by both the installation commander and MAJCOM commander prior to forwarding to Headquarters Air Force for evaluation.

3.17. Processing Ideas of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Employees.

3.17.1. Eligibility of FMS employees. If employees who work on FMS programs meet the definition of "employee" under *Title 5, United States Code, Section 2105*, they may be paid a cash award for an adopted idea that meets a condition in **3.17.2**. Under the Air Force IDEA Program, all Air Force direct-hire employees (including FMS employees) are eligible for cash awards. The term "direct hire" is explained fully in the glossary of this instruction.

3.17.2. Eligibility of the contribution and or idea. To be eligible for submission, ideas must identify a problem and recommend a solution to improve efficiency, economy or effectiveness of the United States Air Force, DoD, or other federal government operation. Cash awards may be paid for the following:

3.17.2.1. Contributions that result in tangible or intangible benefits to the United States Government.

3.17.2.2. Contributions that benefit both the United States and a foreign government. In these cases, the cash award is payable only for those benefits which apply directly to the United States Government.

3.17.3. Ideas resulting in benefits to a foreign government may also result in intangible (windfall) benefits to the United States Government in various forms, such as incentive for repeat business, coalition force enhancement, and partners for peace. These “windfall” benefits cannot be substantiated and are not defensible as proper usage of taxpayers’ money; therefore, they are *ineligible* for cash awards through the IDEA Program. Management may consider other forms of recognition for these ideas. See 5.5.6. of this instruction.

3.18. Requests for Reconsideration.

3.18.1. Requests for reconsideration may be submitted only after notification of final approval or disapproval of the idea. For group ideas, only the primary submitter may submit requests for reconsideration.

3.18.2. Requests are limited to one per idea. If a submitter requests reconsideration of any part of the evaluation (e.g., job responsibility, evaluation, or award), it must be combined into one request. A second request for reconsideration will not be accepted.

3.18.3. For confirmatory ideas, requests for reconsideration of the *award* will not be accepted. Submitter of the SIP must resolve **ALL** issues (i.e., tangible savings, intangible benefits) with the evaluator of the SIP prior to submitting the idea. However, reconsideration of job responsibility may still be submitted through the IDEA Program.

3.18.4. The submitter must input request for reconsideration into IPDS by completing a new idea application, reference the old idea number, and explain in the text portion the reason for reconsideration. The submitter must transmit to reporting official or supervisor for eligibility determination before the one-year ownership period expires. The request must contain one or more of the following reasons:

3.18.4.1. Additional evidence.

3.18.4.2. New material, information, or rationale.

3.18.4.3. New approach.

3.18.4.4. Clarification of significant issues.

3.18.5. Mere disagreement with the answer provided in the evaluation is not justification alone for reconsideration.

3.18.6. The reporting official or supervisor will perform the actions as outlined in paragraph 4.8. of this instruction (if required), and transmit to one level higher than the original approval or disapproval

authority for evaluation. For example, if the original approval or disapproval authority was wing-level DOX, the reconsideration would be transmitted to wing-level Ops Group/CC.

3.18.6.1. A reconsideration of a previous suggestion becomes an idea and will be processed under the procedures of the IDEA Program and awarded accordingly.

3.18.6.2. Award will be paid based on IPDS calculations, regardless of whether the idea was originally submitted as a suggestion or an idea.

Chapter 4

EVALUATING IDEAS

4.1. Evaluating Ideas. Since good ideas directly affect efficiency and effectiveness of the Air Force and federal government, the OPR should make every effort to ensure ideas receive the same timely and positive responses given any other communication. A statement that the idea has merit without rationale to support it is an incomplete evaluation. If evaluations fail to be consistent and thus set up inequitable awards, credibility is lost. If this perception persists, external sources (e.g., Inspector General or congressional inquiry) may address it.

4.1.1. First-time evaluators are encouraged to enter the “Help” portion in IPDS prior to initiating the evaluation.

4.1.2. Do not disapprove an idea because there may be another prescribed way to submit it. For example, a supply procedure change AF Form 86, **Request for Cataloging Data/Action**, AF Form 332, **Base Civil Engineer Work Request**, AF Form 1046, **Challenge/Referral Zero Overpricing**, or safety improvements are just a few of the estimated 700 separate improvement processes. Even though other management programs have forms or procedures to report corrections or changes, the Air Force IDEA Program interfaces with all of them. It supports voluntary submission of ideas that can improve any government function. The separate improvement process must be completed in accordance with its assigned Air Force policy before being submitted as an idea.

4.1.3. An existing directive or instruction may be changed as a result of an approved idea. If there was a directive or instruction in existence and an idea caused implementation of an established requirement that had not been previously implemented, the idea must be approved.

4.1.4. If the entire idea cannot be adopted, consider whether it may be adopted in part or modified. If, during the evaluation process, the idea leads an evaluator to conclude there is a better solution to the problem, that solution should be adopted and the submitter given credit.

4.1.5. Evaluation must show how the idea will correct the problem. Ideas not approved will receive an evaluation stating why they were not adopted. Failure to provide a sufficient explanation could result in a request for reconsideration.

4.1.6. Evaluators must maintain documentation used to determine tangible savings for 18 months following final approval or disapproval of an idea. This documentation will be required if an audit of the evaluation is conducted.

4.1.7. The submitter understands the Air Force has the right to not approve (adopt) an idea after appropriate evaluation. However, management’s evaluation should fully explain reasons for disapproval.

4.2. Duplicate Ideas. Check the IDEA Pool for ideas that duplicate another suggested solution for which someone holds ownership rights.

4.2.1. If an idea indicates the same problem as an earlier idea but contributes a different solution, it is not considered a duplicate and should be evaluated on its own merits.

4.2.2. There may be a case where more than one idea is received that concerns a similar, particular problem. If they propose different solutions, they should each be evaluated. In the final evaluation, show how the approved idea corrected the problem.

4.3. Computation of Savings.

4.3.1. Savings may be tangible, intangible, or a combination of both. Every effort should be made by evaluators to identify tangible savings. The MO Office ensures management validates accuracy of tangible savings reported by evaluators. For more information see [4.14.](#) and [4.15.](#)

4.3.2. If an idea has tangible savings, implementation is mandatory.

4.3.3. Ideas approved for optional use will receive a one-time award based on intangible benefits.

4.3.4. Tangible savings are computed based on estimated net savings for the first year of operation. *EXCEPTION:* When the improvement has a significant up-front investment (a minimum of 50 percent of the estimated first-year savings), but will yield tangible savings for more than one year (normally three years), the evaluator will manually calculate the average annual net savings and enter that amount in IPDS or AF Form 1000-1, block 4A.

4.3.5. Do not include any costs associated with conducting the evaluation or printing costs for publications.

4.3.6. Compute estimated first-year tangible savings for evaluator's area of responsibility. Savings for other organizations are not included unless the approval authority also has responsibility for them. Usually the first-level evaluator computes savings for an installation; the MAJCOM-level evaluator for a command, and the Air Force-level evaluator for the entire Air Force.

4.4. Ideas Proposing New Legislation or Changes to Legislation.

4.4.1. OPRs at all functional levels must recommend approval before the idea can be forwarded to the next level. The idea must provide a statement of need and estimated tangible savings or intangible benefits for ideas proposing new legislation to be processed. If any OPR, regardless of the functional level, fails to support this type of idea, the idea will be returned to the submitter as a disapproval.

4.4.2. If the Air Force OPR recommends adoption, the complete package is forwarded to AFMIA for forwarding to DoD or federal agency outside Air Force for processing.

4.5. Authorized Delays.

4.5.1. Under certain circumstances, a maximum number of three authorized delays per evaluation level are authorized. The evaluator will update IPDS stating the rationale for delay. IPDS will automatically calculate the appropriate number of days.

4.5.2. The number of days per authorized delay is as follows:

4.5.2.1. Extensive study or test - 180 days.

4.5.2.2. Research and development - 180 days.

4.5.2.3. Awaiting coordination - 5 days.

4.5.2.4. Awaiting input on co-submitters' job responsibility determination – 5 days.

4.5.2.5. Evaluator TDY - 5 days.

4.5.2.6. Evaluators on annual or sick leave - 5 days.

4.5.2.7. Awaiting Uniform Board Action - 365 days.

4.5.2.8. Other - 3 days.

4.5.3. MO will provide reports of all ideas in authorized delay status to commanders.

4.6. Subject Identifier and Subject Area. First-level evaluators assign a subject identifier or a subject area associated with the idea by reviewing the drop down boxes of the Subject Identifier and Subject Area available on the Evaluation Screen of IPDS and choosing the appropriate identifier or subject. Each subsequent evaluator is responsible for either verifying the initial determination or assigning a new identifier or subject area. All identifiers or subject areas will remain for cross-reference identification in the IDEA Pool. [attachment 3](#) and [attachment 4](#) contain listings of subject identifiers and subject areas.

4.7. Job Responsibility Determination. The reporting official or supervisor determines job responsibility based on the merits of each idea.

4.7.1. If an idea *can be* implemented by an individual (submitter), without approval of higher authority, including the reporting official or supervisor, the action is considered to be *within* job responsibility.

4.7.2. If the submitter's *primary* responsibility is to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be *within* job responsibility. If in doubt, check the submitter's position description, enlisted performance report or officer performance report for verification.

4.7.3. If an idea is developed by a team or group and can be implemented without approval of higher authority, or if the team has been officially chartered, in writing, to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be *within* job responsibility.

4.7.4. As a general rule, *if not addressed above*, ideas from base level that must be approved and implemented at command-level or higher *normally* are **not** job responsibility. The same rationale applies for command personnel when approval authority is at Headquarters Air Force or higher.

4.7.5. All other ideas are considered to be *outside* job responsibility.

4.8. Reporting Official or Supervisor.

4.8.1. Complete all actions within three workdays. (If reporting official or supervisor also serves as first-level evaluator, paragraph [4.10.](#), an additional five working days are authorized to complete the evaluation).

4.8.1.1. Enter IPDS and acknowledge receipt (by completing actions as described in IPDS notification memorandum) within one workday of receiving an electronic notification that an idea requires attention.

4.8.1.2. If actions in paragraphs [4.8.](#) through [4.11.](#) are not completed within established time limits, notices are electronically sent to the unit POC for corrective action, along with submitter.

4.8.2. Determine idea eligibility:

4.8.2.1. Check IDEA Pool in IPDS for duplicate ideas. If it is a duplicate, update IPDS accordingly, annotate the original idea number and close the record.

4.8.2.2. Check all other ineligibility criteria found on the reporting official or supervisor's portion of IPDS, AF Form 1000A, and in [chapter 3](#), paragraph [3.2](#).

4.8.2.3. If ineligible, give reason in text of evaluation and select the appropriate ineligibility codes.

4.8.3. Determine job responsibility and mark appropriate block. Extreme care should be taken with this step in the process, since job responsibility is a determining factor in calculating awards.

4.8.4. Determine functional subject of idea:

4.8.4.1. If *within* the reporting official or supervisor's functional area, reporting official or supervisor will also act as first-level evaluator.

4.8.4.2. If *outside* reporting official or supervisor's functional area, reporting official or supervisor will mark "I Cannot Evaluate" and an electronic message will be forwarded to the unit POC dealing with the IDEA Program, who will then determine the functional evaluator.

4.9. First-Level Evaluator. Evaluator may solicit input from the submitter and other functional areas to perform a thorough analysis. **NOTE:** Only one evaluation per level is allowed in IPDS. Levels which require coordinating with other organizations must be accomplished prior to completing the evaluation in IPDS.

4.9.1. Complete all actions within five workdays (unless evaluator requests authorized delay – See paragraph [4.5](#)).

4.9.2. Enter IPDS and acknowledge receipt (by completing action as described in IPDS notification memorandum) within one workday of receiving an electronic notification that an idea requires evaluation.

4.9.3. If actions in paragraphs [4.8](#) through [4.11](#) are not completed within established time limits, notices are electronically sent to the unit POC for corrective action, and to the submitter.

4.9.4. Check IDEA Pool for duplicate ideas, (See paragraph [4.2](#)).

4.9.5. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, agrees to implement, and also recommends wider use they must:

4.9.5.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.9.5.2. Mark the appropriate box; enter either "projected implementation date" or "actual implementation date."

4.9.5.3. If implementation is projected for a future date, complete "actual implementation date" field when idea is implemented. **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.9.5.4. Identify next level of review and transmit through the system for further consideration. IPDS will generate a notification to the certifying official to initiate award payment for recognition.

4.9.6. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, agrees to implement, but *does not* recommend wider use they must:

4.9.6.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.9.6.2. Follow process outlined in paragraphs [4.9.5.2.](#) and [4.9.5.3.](#)

4.9.6.3. Completion of process will generate a notification to the certifying official to initiate award payment.

4.9.7. If the evaluator *does not* have approval authority, but recommends approval:

4.9.7.1. Enter evaluation or recommendation and provide benefits for this level in the evaluation text.

4.9.7.2. Identify next level of review and transmit the idea for further evaluation.

4.9.8. If the evaluator has disapproval authority and disapproves the idea:

4.9.8.1. Provide rationale; mark the appropriate box.

4.9.8.2. Forward idea through the system, if next level is known, or exit IPDS. Evaluator's unit POC will receive notification.

4.9.9. If the evaluator *does not* have disapproval authority and recommends disapproval they:

4.9.9.1. Will disapprove idea if telephone or e-mail coordination is obtained from next level OPR, if that level has disapproval authority. Include in body of text a "coordinated with" statement, which will include the OPR's name, rank, office symbol, telephone number and date of contact.

4.9.9.2. Transmit through the system, providing an information copy to evaluator's unit POC.

4.10. Second-Level Evaluator. Evaluator may solicit input from the submitter and other functional areas to perform a thorough analysis:

4.10.1. Complete all actions within ten workdays (unless evaluator requests authorized delay).

4.10.2. Enter IPDS and acknowledge receipt (by completing action as described in IPDS notification memorandum) within one workday of receiving electronic notification that an idea requires evaluation.

4.10.3. If actions in paragraphs [4.8.](#) through [4.11.](#) are not completed within established time limits, notices are electronically sent to the unit POC for corrective action, and to the submitter.

4.10.4. Process as in paragraphs [4.9.5.2.](#) and [4.9.5.3.](#) **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.10.5. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, agrees to implement, and also recommends wider use they will:

4.10.5.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.10.5.2. Process as in paragraphs [4.9.5.2.](#) and [4.9.5.3.](#) **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.10.5.3. Identify the next level of review, if known, and transmit through IPDS for further consideration. Notification will also be sent to the certifying official to initiate award payment.

4.10.6. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, agrees to implement, but does not recommend wider use they will:

4.10.6.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.10.6.2. Process as in paragraphs 4.9.5.2. and 4.9.5.3. **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.10.6.3. IPDS will send notification to the certifying official to initiate award payment.

4.10.7. If the evaluator has disapproval authority and disapproves the idea:

4.10.7.1. Provide rationale; mark the appropriate box.

4.10.7.2. IPDS will send notification to the submitter and provide an information copy to evaluator's unit POC.

4.10.7.3. If a MAJCOM-level OPR does not approve a change at their level and does not object to local usage, they can indicate approval for optional use, with explanation in the text. The MAJCOM OPR must notify the appropriate base, which may then approve for their use. This approval action sends the idea to the IDEA Pool.

4.10.8. If the evaluator *does not* have approval authority, but recommends approval:

4.10.8.1. Enter evaluation or recommendation and provide benefits for this level in the evaluation text.

4.10.8.2. Identify and transmit the idea to the final Air Force approval authority for evaluation; also transmit informational copies to addressees, as appropriate.

4.10.9. If the evaluator *does not* have disapproval authority and recommends disapproval:

4.10.9.1. Will disapprove idea if telephone or E-mail coordination is obtained from next level OPR, if that level has disapproval authority. Include in body of text a "coordinated with" statement, which will include the OPR's name, rank, office symbol, telephone number, and date of contact.

4.10.9.2. Transmit through the system, providing an information copy to evaluator's unit POC.

4.11. Air Force Evaluator. Evaluator may solicit input from the submitter and other functional areas to perform a thorough analysis.

4.11.1. Complete all actions within 10 workdays (unless evaluator requests authorized delay).

4.11.2. Enter IPDS. See **chapter 2**, paragraphs 2.1. and 2.2.3. and acknowledge receipt within one workday of receiving an electronic notification that an idea requires evaluation.

4.11.3. If actions in paragraphs 4.8. through 4.11. are not completed within established time limits, notices are electronically sent to the unit POC for corrective action, along with submitter.

4.11.4. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, agrees to implement, and also recommends wider use they will:

4.11.4.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.11.4.2. Process as in paragraphs 4.9.5.2. and 4.9.5.3. **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.11.4.3. Identify other federal agencies (outside Air Force) functional reviewers and transmit to AFMIA for further processing (wider use) and to the certifying officer for recognition of Air Force benefits.

4.11.5. If the evaluator has approval authority, approves idea, and agrees to implement, but *does not* recommend wider use they will:

4.11.5.1. Provide rationale for adoption and determine benefits.

4.11.5.2. Process as in paragraphs 4.9.5.2. and 4.9.5.3. **NOTE:** Approval authority is responsible for ensuring implementation.

4.11.5.3. IPDS will transmit notification to the certifying official to initiate award payment.

4.11.6. If the evaluator *does not* have approval authority, but recommends approval:

4.11.6.1. Enter evaluation or recommendation and provide benefits for this level.

4.11.6.2. Identify next level of review and transmit the idea to AFMIA for forwarding to DoD or federal agencies outside the Air Force for processing.

4.11.6.3. The body of the text will contain the next level OPR's agency, address, and if possible, telephone number and POC. If this information is not provided, AFMIA will return to the Air Force functional reviewer.

4.11.7. If the evaluator *does not* have disapproval authority and recommends disapproval: If the disapproval authority lies outside the Air Force (e.g., DoD or federal agency) and the final Air Force evaluator does not recommend approval, telephone contact with the Federal Agencies' OPR is authorized to obtain disapproval. The text of the evaluation should reflect this coordination.

4.11.8. If the evaluator has approval or disapproval authority and *disapproves* the idea they will:

4.11.8.1. Provide rationale and mark the appropriate box.

4.11.8.2. Transmit through the system, providing an information copy to evaluator's unit POC. **NOTE:** Idea will not be forwarded to outside agencies.

4.11.8.3. If an Air Force-level OPR does not approve a change at their level and does not object to local usage, they can indicate approval for optional use, with explanation in the text. The MAJ-COM OPRs will be notified of this decision and they must notify the appropriate base, who may then approve for local use (for tangible savings see para 3.18.2. award reconsideration). This approval action sends the idea to the IDEA Pool.

4.12. DoD or Federal Agency (outside the Air Force) Evaluator.

4.12.1. AFMIA will request a federal agency (outside Air Force) evaluation when the Air Force functional reviewer either approves (or recommends approval) of the idea, provides benefits for the Air Force, and identifies the other federal agency functional reviewer.

4.12.2. If AFMIA does not receive the DoD or federal agencies (outside Air Force) evaluation within 180 days, the idea is considered disapproved and returned through the appropriate channels to the originating base.

4.13. Request by Submitter for DoD Reconsideration. Supervisor determines eligibility (See 3.18 for guidance) and forwards to AFMIA for proper processing.

4.14. Tangible Savings. Every effort should be made by evaluators to identify tangible savings. Both cost avoidance and hard savings are tangible savings. The MO Office ensures management validates accuracy of Air Force tangible savings reported by evaluators.

4.14.1. *Cost Avoidance.* Must meet at least one of the following conditions:

4.14.1.1. Measurable, quantifiable savings from actions that remove a previously documented and funding need for increase in manpower or O&M costs.

4.14.1.2. Elimination of necessary costs if present management practices continue.

4.14.1.3. Lets you reach a required higher level of readiness or increased value (quality or timeliness) of output without increasing staffing or cost.

4.14.1.4. Absorbs a growing workload without increasing staffing or cost.

4.14.2. *Hard Savings.* Must meet at least one of the following conditions:

4.14.2.1. Measurable, quantifiable savings that can be precisely identified and placed under management control at the time savings occur.

4.14.2.1.1. Costs for manpower authorizations or funded work year reductions.

4.14.2.1.2. Reduced or removed operating cost (such as utilities, travel, and repair).

4.14.2.1.3. Must be reflected in specific reductions in the approved program or budget after obtaining them.

4.14.2.2. The evaluator will consider turn in of equipment if any of the following apply:

4.14.2.2.1. Supply officials certify reissue to another authorized agency with a funded requirement.

4.14.2.2.2. Turn-in cancels a purchase request by another authorized agency.

4.14.2.2.3. The equipment is sold at an auction.

4.14.2.2.4. A contract is changed and the using agency is able to recoup an investment.
NOTE: Costs and penalties associated with turn-in equipment are to be subtracted from savings.

4.14.2.3. Any reported manpower or work-hour savings must be documented by the OPR to show that the idea will eliminate manpower authorizations or will save work-hours by reducing or eliminating documented overtime, work backlog, or depot maintenance labor standards.

4.14.2.4. When manpower resource savings are identified, the OPR must obtain confirmation of manpower resource savings from the manpower officials responsible for the applicable manpower standard containing the process recommended for change.

4.14.2.4.1. Manpower resource savings are based on "authorized" grades.

4.14.2.4.2. Air Force or Command Manpower Standards will be adjusted to capture the approved process change and manpower resource savings.

4.14.2.4.3. A copy of the final approved idea evaluation, available from the MO analyst, will be made part of the manpower standard in accordance with AFMAN 38-208V1, *Air Force*

Management Engineering Program (MEP) Processes, and AFMAN 38-208V3, Air Force Management Engineering Program (MEP) Logistics Composite Model.

4.14.2.5. When contracts are affected, the administrative contracting officer will act as a validating official for manpower or work-hour savings incurred by a contractor.

4.14.2.6. If available, use base labor costs or an estimate using average cost-center labor rates to compute work-hour savings. (Include in all labor rates the leave and other personnel benefit costs as shown for civilian and military personnel in AFI 65-503, *US Air Force Cost and Planning Factors*). Base standard rates for calculating military work-hour savings on an 8-hour day. **NOTE:** Do not include overhead costs.

4.15. Intangible Benefits. Benefits that cannot be computed in specific monetary terms.

4.15.1. If tangible savings cannot be quantified, the approved idea will be determined to have intangible benefits.

4.15.2. When tangible savings cannot be quantified, the significance of the approved idea must be stated in the text.

Chapter 5

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

5.1. Award Approval Authority. The Secretary of the Air Force delegates authority to approve monetary awards and incur necessary expense for non-monetary recognition for an idea, invention, patent, or scientific achievement.

5.1.1. Recognition is made to an individual, multiple submitters (team or group), or the estate of a deceased person.

5.1.2. Recognition is made at each approval level of the idea. **NOTE:** Recognition may occur as many as four times and as few as one.

5.1.3. Permanent Change of Station, discharge, retirement, resignation, or death does not affect payment of an approved award.

5.2. Award Funding.

5.2.1. Federal Regulation (5 C.F.R. 451.103(c)(1)) requires funding to be available for paying IDEA awards.

5.2.2. Obligations and expenditures will be tracked against the budgeted program.

5.2.3. All awards will be funded from Operations and Maintenance funds at the base where the submitter was assigned when the idea was submitted.

5.3. Eligibility for Monetary Awards. The following people meet the definition of employee and are eligible for monetary awards:

5.3.1. All Air Force military members and Air Force federal civilian employees paid from appropriated funds.

5.3.2. Air Force Academy cadets.

5.3.3. Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets who have enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Obligated Reserve Section.

5.3.4. Air Force Reserve personnel on active duty orders. Individual Mobility Augmentees are included in this category. **NOTE:** Dual-status technicians (members of the Reserve) participate as civilians under **Title 5, United States Code.**

5.3.5. Air National Guard **Title 5, U.S.C.** employees.

5.3.6. Senior Executive Service (SES) personnel.

5.3.7. Air Force Military and Air Force federal civilian retirees if they submitted their idea before retiring.

5.3.8. Direct-hire non-U.S. citizen employees are eligible, provided the installation commander has established a program to include them. Installation commanders are authorized to administer IDEA Program awards compatible with local laws, customs, practices, governing treaties, and executive agreements.

5.4. Eligibility for Non-Monetary Awards (e.g., IDEA Certificates):

- 5.4.1. Personnel not included in paragraph 5.3. such as contractors, non-appropriated fund employees, military dependents, and private citizens.
- 5.4.2. Indirect-hire employees who are employed under agreements with foreign governments are eligible if they are employees of a foreign government and assigned to U.S. forces on a reimbursable cost basis.
- 5.4.3. National Guard Technicians employed under Title 32, U.S.C. 709 and ANG Title 32 military members who participate in the IDEA Program under regulations prescribed by the National Guard Bureau are eligible.
- 5.4.4. Individuals who decline monetary award.
- 5.4.5. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets who have not yet enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Obligated Reserve Section.

5.5. Monetary and Non-Monetary Awards.

- 5.5.1. Recognition may be either a monetary or a non-monetary award, but may not be a time-off award. Do not use promotional merchandise in lieu of a cash award.
- 5.5.2. Awards differ according to job responsibility of submitter.
- 5.5.3. All cash awards are subject to applicable tax rules.
- 5.5.4. The maximum award for one idea is \$10,000.
- 5.5.5. When a team or group idea is found to be within job responsibility of one or more submitters, but not within the job responsibility of the remaining submitters, awards are automatically calculated in IPDS and paid according to the criteria appropriate to each submitter's status.
- 5.5.6. Non-Monetary Awards.
 - 5.5.6.1. An IDEA certificate will be issued for submitters ineligible for monetary recognition and for eligible submitters who decline monetary recognition. Electronic notification of approval will be sent to submitter's unit POC, who will print certificate and arrange presentation.
 - 5.5.6.2. Giving Certificates in Braille. All Air Force award certificates for blind award recipients must have Braille overlaid lettering as well as standard print. Use local purchase authority to obtain these certificates.
 - 5.5.6.3. At the discretion of the local MO office, submitters who receive a certificate may also be presented with an IDEA Program promotional item valued at less than \$25. **NOTE:** This also applies for submitters at installations where there is no MO office or XP/XPM FOA, e.g., Air Force Reserve.

5.6. Granting Monetary Awards. Pay monetary awards for actual improvements and benefits to the government. Grant monetary awards on approval of the idea under the following conditions:

- 5.6.1. If an idea is approved fully, or in part, pay an award for the tangible savings, intangible benefits or both. Only one award for intangible benefits is authorized per approved idea, regardless of whether multiple evaluators determine intangible benefits.

5.6.2. Pay an award for each level of approval where tangible savings are realized. The total maximum award is \$10,000. An award based on tangible savings is not authorized when an idea is approved for “optional use.”

5.6.2.1. If an idea is approved locally, the award will be considered based on local tangible savings, intangible benefits or both. Additional awards based on tangible savings will be commensurate with approval at a higher level for wider application, e.g., MAJCOM and Air Force.

5.6.2.2. Awards will be calculated by IPDS and previous payments will be subtracted from the total award.

5.6.3. Base monetary award only on savings to operations and activities supported by appropriated funds.

5.6.4. Ideas that alter contracts and result in tangible savings or intangible benefits to the government are eligible for a cash award. See para [4.14.2.2.4](#).

5.6.5. To ensure monetary awards paid for approved ideas are commensurate with savings realized, previous award amount paid through other programs, such as the Incentive Awards Program, must be deducted from the idea award. If the award amount paid through another program exceeds the idea monetary award, the idea monetary award will not be paid.

5.6.6. An award that is erroneously paid because of management or administrative error cannot be recovered.

5.6.7. When an award is paid for an idea made under false pretenses, the case file will be referred to the Judge Advocate (JA) for opinion concerning the legality of recovering the award amount.

5.7. Monetary Awards for Ideas *Outside* Job Responsibility.

5.7.1. Individual Submitter:

5.7.1.1. Tangible Savings. Award will be 15 percent of estimated first-year savings; total award will be no less than \$200 and no more than \$10,000 (includes any additional awards from reconsiderations).

5.7.1.2. Intangible Benefits. Award will be \$200. Only one award for intangible benefits is authorized per approved idea, regardless of whether multiple evaluators determine intangible benefits.

5.7.2. Multiple (Team or Group) Submitters. The award will be divided equally among the team members, depending upon each submitter’s job responsibility status. If any member of the team is ineligible for a cash award, or declines the award, their share will not be redistributed among the remaining team members.

5.7.2.1. To ensure compliance with the \$10,000 award ceiling, IPDS will calculate all awards, rounding down when occasion demands (e.g., three submitters share, but when \$10,000 is divided by three the result goes over \$10,000 by \$1—IPDS will calculate to ensure the ceiling is kept intact).

5.7.2.2. Tangible Savings. Award will be 15 percent of estimated first-year savings, total award will be no less than \$200 and no more than \$10,000.

5.7.2.3. Intangible Benefits. Award will be \$200 per submission, shared equally by co-submitters.

5.8. Monetary Awards for Ideas *Within* Job Responsibility.

5.8.1. Individual submitter:

5.8.1.1. Tangible Savings. Award will be three percent of estimated first-year savings. To be eligible for an award, the idea must save a minimum of \$20,000; award will be based on entire savings, not the amount exceeding \$20,000. Minimum award is \$600 and maximum award is \$10,000 (includes any additional awards from reconsiderations).

5.8.1.2. Intangible Benefits. No monetary award.

5.8.2. Multiple (Team or Group) Submitters. The award will be divided equally among the team members, depending upon each submitter's job responsibility status. If any member of the team is ineligible for a cash award, or declines the award, their share will not be redistributed among the remaining team members.

5.8.2.1. Tangible Savings: Award will be three percent of estimated first-year savings. To be eligible for an award, the idea must save a minimum of \$20,000; award will be based on entire savings, not the amount exceeding \$20,000. Minimum award is \$600 and maximum award is \$10,000. Submitters will share equally in total award.

5.8.2.2. Intangible Benefits: No monetary award.

5.9. Processing Scientific Achievement Awards through the IDEA Program. Scientific Achievement awards will be based on intangible benefits. Use the award procedures described in paragraph [3.13.](#), Submitting Scientific Achievements.

5.10. Processing Invention and Patent Awards through the IDEA Program.

5.10.1. See paragraph [3.15.](#)

5.10.2. The recipient of an invention or patent award is eligible to earn a monetary idea award for the same achievement.

5.11. Processing Awards for Air Force Ideas Approved by DoD or Other Federal Agencies. The total award funded by the Air Force may *not* exceed the Air Force limit of \$10,000.

5.11.1. Awards for tangible savings.

5.11.1.1. When one DoD component or federal agency (outside the Air Force) adopts an idea and the award amount is \$200 or less, the Air Force will fund the award. When the award exceeds \$200, the adopting agency is responsible for funding the entire award.

5.11.1.2. When more than one DoD component or federal agency (outside the Air Force) adopts an idea, AFMIA will prorate each agency's share. If an agency's share exceeds \$200, AFMIA will notify the agency of their obligation to fund their share of the award. If an agency's share is \$200 or less, the Air Force will fund that portion of the award.

5.11.2. Awards for intangible benefits.

5.11.2.1. A maximum of \$200 will be awarded for intangible benefits by the Air Force for any one idea.

5.11.2.2. When one or more DoD components or federal agencies (outside the Air Force) adopts an idea with intangible benefits, the Air Force will fund a \$200 award and AFMIA will notify the agencies of their obligation to fund their share of the award.

5.12. Processing Awards for Other Federal Agency Ideas Approved by Air Force. The Air Force may pay other DoD or federal agency personnel for ideas that benefit Air Force operations. If a DoD or federal agency's idea has Air Force-wide application, AFMIA will arrange for payment.

5.13. Evaluator Recognition. May be recognized with a non-monetary award.

5.14. Special Recognition Awards. Plaques, trophies, and similar items valued no higher than \$150 may be given in addition to a monetary or non-monetary IDEA award. Example is the Air Force Exceptional Innovator Award.

5.15. Air Force Exceptional Innovator Award.

5.15.1. Purpose. Recognizes the most outstanding AF innovator (individual or group) who contributed to continual performance improvement through the IDEA Program.

5.15.2. Eligibility. Air Force Active Duty personnel, Air Force Reserves, Air Force National Guard, Air Force civilian employees, and Air Force contractors. Participants must have an approved IDEA during the previous fiscal year (1 Oct - 30 Sep). Tangible savings must be validated. Individuals or groups may be nominated. They may also be eligible for the Air Force Productivity Excellence Award.

5.15.3. Base-level MO Offices may submit one nominee to their MAJCOM.

5.15.4. MAJCOM/DRU/FOA Manpower Office will consolidate its nominee(s) with base-level submissions and select one nominee to forward to AFMIA.

5.15.5. Criteria. See [attachment 5](#).

5.15.6. Administrative Guidelines. The entire package must be prepared using Word for Windows software and the template at [attachment 6](#). The package must be typed in 12-pitch, Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. Material must be unclassified.

5.15.7. The application package consists of a narrative not exceeding two single-spaced pages and an endorsement with savings validation from the Chief, Installation Manpower and Organization Office (MO), or equivalent. The application package will be coordinated and submitted in accordance with wing and MAJCOM policies. Exhibits will not be allowed. The nomination will be forwarded either by e-mail or virus free 3 ½" disk to AFMIA/MIP.

5.15.8. Nomination will include: Name(s) of nominee, grade or rank, duty title, and organizational mailing address.

5.15.9. MAJCOM coordinating offices will ensure the number of submissions sent to AFMIA do not exceed the number allowed and that applicants meet eligibility requirements. MAJCOM coordinating offices will ensure an electronic or disk copy of the application package is submitted to AFMIA not later than the date published by AFMIA. Send submissions to AFMIA/MIP (Attn: Exceptional Inno-

vator Award), 550 E Street East, Randolph AFB TX 78150-4451. Application packages received in the wrong format will not be accepted and will be returned for corrections. Any application or corrected application received after the cutoff date will not be accepted.

5.15.10. Accomplishment Description. Narrative should address impact on mission, to include any impact on associated Mission Essential Tasks (METs), tangible savings, intangible benefits, and number of approved ideas.

5.15.11. Submission and Selection Process.

5.15.12. Installation level MO Offices submit one nominee (may be either one individual or a group) endorsed by the Chief, Installation MO Office or equivalent, to the installation's MAJCOM/DRU/FOA MO office. Tenant unit nominations are submitted by the unit POC, endorsed by the unit commander, and forwarded to the unit's MAJCOM.

5.15.13. MAJCOM/DRU/FOA Manpower Office reviews and selects one nomination and forwards to AFMIA by 15 Nov.

5.15.14. AFMIA will establish a selection panel, consisting of O-6's or civilian equivalents, to review nomination packages and select a winner.

5.15.15. The winner will be notified through their MAJCOM and base MO office. The MO office at the base where the nomination was submitted will notify recipients who have transferred, separated, or retired.

5.15.16. Award Presentation. The award consists of an IDEA Recognition Certificate, congratulatory letters, and a plaque. Regardless of where the nominee is presently assigned, the nominating base will ensure the nomination is coordinated with the nominee's present commander. The award and any subsequent TDY costs will be borne by the nominating base. Contractors' TDY will be paid in accordance with the Joint Federal Travel Regulation. Selection and presentation of the award will be in February to coincide with the Air Force Productivity Excellence Award.

Chapter 6

IDEA PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

6.1. Program Administration. See [chapter 1](#) for Responsibilities.

6.2. Contingency and Wartime Processing. The Air Force IDEA Program supports increased productivity to aid emergency or wartime efforts. It provides incentives to build morale, heighten interest on the job, and increase production, thus helping to overcome pressing shortages of time and manpower.

6.2.1. The scope and type of emergency plus the length of time will affect program operations.

6.2.2. An emergency limited to a single theater of operation will affect only those MO offices located in theater.

6.2.3. In the event of a limited communications interruption (less than a month):

6.2.3.1. Continue all processes including IPDS.

6.2.3.2. See [attachment 2](#) of this instruction for alternate submission method of updating data locally and then submitting to AFMIA when communications are reinstated.

6.2.4. In the event of an extended communications interruption (more than a month):

6.2.4.1. Discontinue use of IPDS.

6.2.4.2. Implement the alternate idea process in [attachment 2](#) of this instruction within the framework of this instruction to:

6.2.4.2.1. Suspend idea evaluations.

6.2.4.2.2. Report delays.

6.2.4.2.3. Notify submitters.

6.2.4.2.4. Record number of ideas received and awarded and the dollar amounts of awards and benefits.

6.2.5. During wartime:

6.2.5.1. Place program on hold status until immediate emergency needs are met.

6.2.5.2. Discontinue special program recognition and IPDS.

6.2.5.3. Revert to alternate idea system. AFMIA will establish:

6.2.5.3.1. Changes to idea eligibility requirements to meet the industrial complex atmosphere (wartime mission).

6.2.5.3.2. Extremely limited evaluation and award authorities.

6.2.5.3.3. Any special program provisions needed if the evacuation of MO office personnel occurs.

6.3. Reports. Oversight of the IDEA Program is critical to its success. To ensure reporting consistency, metric, and standardized reports will not be modified for local use.

6.3.1. IPDS will provide the capability to create installation-unique reports and run queries. Analysts will have access to all data in the system, not just for their level of authority.

6.3.2. As need arises, AFMIA may develop additional standardized reports.

6.4. Metric Reports. Compliance with the IDEA Program will be assessed by taking measurements in the following five areas. Metrics will be provided quarterly, and installation levels may run these reports (Report Control Symbol (RCS) HAF-XPM(Q)9911) as required by their senior leaders.

6.4.1. *Overall Processing Time.* The time from date of submission through date of closure. For monetary awards, it is the date the idea is approved.

6.4.2. *Participation Rate.* The percentage of Air Force population submitting one or more ideas during the reporting period. (Total number of unique SSNs submitted divided by strength).

6.4.3. *Submission Rate.* The percentage of ideas submitted. (Total number of submissions divided by assigned strength.)

6.4.4. *Approval Rate.* The percentage of ideas approved. (Total number of approved submissions divided by the sum of the total number of eligible submissions received in the reporting period and ideas carried over from the previous reporting period, minus open submissions pending evaluations.)

6.4.5. *Rate of Return.* The comparison of tangible savings to the total dollars awarded (compares total dollar savings to the total award dollars paid).

6.5. Standardized Reports. Reports will be available in text or graphic format.

6.5.1. *Cumulative Statistics.* Report will include number of ideas received, ideas open, ideas approved, ideas disapproved, and ideas pending implementation. Reports will include:

6.5.1.1. Ineligible ideas and duplicate ideas.

6.5.1.2. Dollars saved (broken out by hard and cost avoidance savings); dollars awarded (broken out by tangible savings and intangible benefits).

6.5.1.3. Percentage with tangible savings; percentage with intangible benefits.

6.5.1.4. Rate of return (dollars awarded to dollars saved).

6.5.2. *Authorized Delays.* Report will contain prior number of authorized delays, number of days requested, number of days delayed, reason for delay, idea number, title, OPR, and suspense date.

6.5.2.1. Notification of evaluations exceeding the authorized delay will be provided by IPDS to the POC.

6.5.3. *Unauthorized Delays.* Report will contain prior number of authorized delays, number of days requested, number of days delayed, idea number, title, OPR, and date exceeded authorized delay.

6.5.4. *Overdue Evaluations* (Authorized and Unauthorized Delay reports combined).

6.5.5. *Implementation Report.* Report will contain idea number, title, OPR, and Projected Implementation Date, and will track ideas exceeding projected implementation date where no actual implementation date has been input to IPDS.

6.5.6. *Number of Ideas Open* (pending evaluation).

6.5.7. *Total Processing Time* (from submission to disapproval or award payment date).

6.5.8. *Cost of Non-Implementation*. Cumulative report will include ideas when they reach 90 days after approval and remain unimplemented. Cost will be calculated as a percentage of estimated first-year savings.

6.5.9. *Reports to Identify Trends* in approval or disapproval, submission frequency and number of submitters.

6.5.10. *Purge Report*. Report will process automatically 30 days prior to record purging. Record will be purged 18 months after the "Projected Implementation Date," when no "Actual Implementation Date" has been entered.

6.5.11. *Ideas Purged from IPDS*. Report will contain idea number, title, OPR, date approved or disapproved, date purged.

6.6. Installation-Unique Reports and Queries. The capability to create ad hoc reports and queries is available through IPDS, using DISCOVERER software.

6.7. Marketing. Market the program frequently by:

6.7.1. Preparing news releases on innovative, high impact ideas for publication by local public affairs offices.

6.7.2. Making individuals aware of the program by presentations at commander's call, newcomers' briefings, orientations, and staff meetings.

6.7.3. Publicizing the location of the IDEA Office in the base bulletin and base newspapers.

6.7.4. Displaying slogans on posters and large billboards such as those used in ground and fire safety programs.

6.7.5. Publishing articles about ideas of merit and special awards (such as IDEA Submitter of the Year and Air Force Exceptional IDEA Award) in bulletins, base, local area, and hometown newspapers, and other periodicals.

6.7.6. Purchasing and distributing promotional items to encourage participation.

6.7.7. Establishing and publicizing local recognition programs.

6.7.8. Scheduling IDEA program publicity to coincide with other base-wide special events such as Energy Awareness, Safety, and Fire Prevention Weeks.

6.7.9. Providing informational telephone recordings, using telephone extensions 2274 (CASH) or 4332 (IDEA), if possible.

6.7.10. Using the official Air Force IDEA Program logo. Locally developed logos may be used in conjunction with, but *not* in lieu of, the official logo.

6.7.11. Publicizing contributions and program accomplishments through honor roll displays, newspaper articles, staff meetings, special interest letters, and public television.

6.7.12. Using organizational home page and INTERNET web page.

6.7.13. NOTE: Do not publish contributions that incorporate an invention until all patent rights are determined and patent processing is completed.

6.8. Records Maintenance.

6.8.1. Purge approved ideas from IPDS 18 months after the actual implementation date. If no actual implementation date is entered, the approved ideas purge from IPDS 18 months after projected implementation date. Purge disapproved ideas from IPDS one year after the date of disapproval.

6.9. Forms Prescribed. Air Force Forms 1000, **IDEA APPLICATION**, 1000A, **IDEA INSTRUCTIONS AND INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**, and 1000-1, **IDEA EVALUATION AND TRANSMITTAL**.

JOSEPH H. WEHRLE, JR., Lt General, USAF
DCS/Plans and Programs

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION***Abbreviations and Acronyms*

AFMIA—Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency
AFI—Air Force Instruction
AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive
AFSC—Air Force Specialty Code
ANG—Air National Guard
ASD—Assistant Secretary of Defense
CFR—Code of Federal Regulation
DoD—Department of Defense
DRU—Direct Reporting Unit
DSN—Defense Switching Network
EO—Executive Order
ESP—Emergency Special Program
FASCAP—Fast Payback Capital Investment
FOA—Field Operating Agency
GSU—Geographically Separated Units
IDEA—Innovative Development through Employee Awareness
IG—Inspector General
IPDS—IDEA Program Data System
JAG—Judge Advocate General
MO—Manpower and Organization
MAJCOM—Major Command
MOA/MOU—Memorandum of Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
MPF—Military Personnel Flight
OCR—Office of Collateral Responsibility
OPM—Office of Personnel Management
OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility
PAS—Personnel Accounting System
PIF—Productivity Investment Fund
POC—Point of Contact

PTO—Patent and Trademark Office

SES—Senior Executive Service

SIP—Separate Improvement Process

SIR—Statutory Invention Registration

SSN—Social Security Number

USC —United States Code

Terms

Additional Award—Any award, or series of awards, paid in addition to and after the initial award.

After-the-Fact Idea—Idea presented formally or informally to management prior to submission of AF Form 1000.

Approval—A submission that has been evaluated and approved for implementation.

Approval—or Disapproval Authority Any evaluator who has the ability to implement an idea.

Award—Appropriate recognition for an approved idea.

Certifying Official—Designated resource advisor (in each Personnel Accounting System (PAS) or parent PAS Code) who has responsibility for ensuring funds are available for award payment and assignment of the fund citation.

Confirmatory Idea—Any idea resulting from an approved separate improvement process (e.g., AFTO Form 22 or AFTO Form 135), where ownership is established and tangible savings or intangible benefits are documented on the separate improvement process form. Approved separate improvement process form will be entered into IPDS by the submitter or attached to an AF Form 1000 and presented by the reporting official or supervisor. No evaluation is required.

Co-Submitter—A member of a group or team who proposes a new or improved way of doing business.

Cost Avoidance (Soft Savings)—Must meet at least one of the following conditions: Measurable, quantifiable savings from actions that remove the need for increase in manpower or costs. Elimination of necessary costs if present management practices continued. Action which allows a higher level of readiness or increased value (quality or timeliness) of output without increasing staffing or cost. Absorption of a growing workload with no increases in staffing or cost.

Direct Hire—U.S. Forces are the official employer and carry full responsibility for all administrative and management functions in connection with the employee, including hiring, firing, and compensation. The term “direct hire” is a condition of employment and may apply to either U.S. citizens or non-U.S. citizens. Direct hires are eligible for recognition through the IDEA Program.

Disbursing Official—Finance Officer who authorizes disbursement of funds and transmits to payment activity.

Dual-Status Technicians—Air Reserve Technicians and Air National Guard technicians who, as a condition of their continued civilian employment, must maintain active Reserve or Guard membership in their unit of assignment.

Duplicate Idea—An idea that duplicates another suggested solution for which someone holds ownership

rights.

Evaluation —A functional OPR's analysis of a contribution documented on an AF Form 1000-1 and in IPDS.

Evaluator —An individual assigned by the functional OPR to analyze the contribution.

Force Structure—Changes involving equipment, numbers, size, location, model type, unit designations, or composition of an entire operation (such as the size of the F-16 fleet). Manning increases or decreases are not "force structure."

Government—Refers to Government of the United States.

Group/Team Idea—Idea that has two or more submitters and is the result of their combined efforts.

Hard Savings—Measurable, quantifiable savings that can be precisely identified and placed under management control at the time savings occur. Examples include: Costs for manpower authorizations or funded work-year reductions. Reduced or removed operating cost (such as utilities, travel, and repair). Reflected in specific reductions in the approved program or budget after obtaining them.

Host/Tenant Support Agreements—These agreements are between the host (supplier) and tenant (receiver) according to the resources and capabilities of the host. These agreements are initiated and agreed upon by the head or designated person of each tenant organization and the host.

Idea—A voluntary contribution that defines a problem and recommends a specific solution, proposing improvement to government operations or services.

IDEA Pool—Centralized pool incorporating all approved ideas accessible to all Air Force personnel.

IDEA Program Data System (IPDS)—The automated system which supports the IDEA Program.

Independent Action—Any documented action outside the IDEA process that impacts idea approval or award.

Indirect Hire—The host government is the official employer and carries full responsibility for all administrative and management functions in connection with the employee, including hiring, firing, and compensation. Compensation costs are reimbursable to the host government by the U.S. forces. The term "indirect hire" is a condition of employment and applies to non-U.S. citizens. Indirect hires are ineligible for recognition through the IDEA Program.

Intangible Benefits—Benefits which cannot be computed in specific monetary terms.

Invention —A new and useful process, machine manufacture, or composition of matter which may be patentable under patent laws of the United States.

Mandatory Adoption—Approved idea that must be put to use as directed by the approval authority.

Manpower Savings—Documented elimination of a manpower authorization from the Unit Manpower Document, documented overtime, and/or work backlog.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding —(MOU) These documents identify the parameters of mutually agreed upon statements of facts, intentions, procedures, and policies for future actions and matters of coordination. Normally, they are not used in units lower than major command (MAJCOM) level.

Non-Monetary Award—A certificate and/or promotional item valued at \$25 or less.

Non-U.S. Identification Code (NUSIC)—Used by non-U.S. citizens for identification purposes in lieu of social security number.

Optional Adoption—Approved idea that may or may not be used.

Originating Manpower and Organization (MO) Office The MO office located at the base where the individual was assigned when the idea was submitted.

Overdue —Evaluation exceeding normal processing times with no authorized delay.

Ownership Period—Time period beginning when idea was submitted through one year after final approval or disapproval action.

Patent —A grant issued by the government, giving the owner the right to exclude all others from making, using, or selling the patented invention within the United States, its territories, and possessions. The term “patent” includes utility, design, and plant patents.

Primary Submitter—The lead member of a group or team who proposes a new or improved way of doing business.

Promotional Items—Items valued at \$25 or less that serve as a reminder of participation in the IDEA program. May not include foodstuffs, meals, entertainment, solicited gifts from businesses, clothing, toys, or prizes won by raffles or drawings for which individuals paid to participate.

Reconsideration —A request for further evaluation on a previously evaluated idea, an award, or a job responsibility determination.

Recognition —Monetary or non-monetary award for an approved idea.

Reporting Official or Supervisor—Normally, supervisor of submitter who determines job responsibility and idea eligibility; may also act as first-level evaluator.

Scientific Achievement—Scientific or technological accomplishment contributing to material advances of the armed services or an activity, group, project, or service to the public. May be a technical paper presented to a professional society or an article published in a nationally recognized scientific publication.

Separate Improvement Process Documents—Forms used by other Air Force separate improvement programs (including, but not limited to, AFTO Form 22, **Technical Order Improvement Report and Reply**; AFTO Form 135, **Source, Maintenance and Recoverability Code Change Request**; AF Form 322, **Base Civil Engineer Work Request**; AF Form 601, **Equipment Action Request**; and AF Form 1046, **Zero-Overpricing Challenge/Referral**), that may be eligible for submission through the IDEA Program for evaluation and recognition.

Service Agreements—Also referred to as Agreements for Geographically Separated Units (GSU). Without access to military and civilian personnel records, GSUs usually make agreements for IDEA servicing with the nearest base having an MO office. However, some other base or organization may provide personnel records. This means the MO office must secure extra coordination when personnel information on individuals is required from the various record sections.

Servicing Manpower and Organization (MO) Office—Any MO office providing review and forwarding off-base ideas through the alternate (semi-automated) evaluation process.

Soft Savings—See Cost Avoidance.

Strength —Refers to assigned strength and includes officer, enlisted, civilian, and reservists on active

duty. Military assigned strength is obtained from the Personnel Readiness Unit in the Military Personnel Flight; civilian assigned strength is obtained from the Civilian Personnel Office.

Submission—An idea, invention, patent, or scientific achievement.

Submitter—An individual who proposes a new or improved way of doing business.

Tangible Savings—Savings to the government that can be measured in dollars.

Unit —For IPDS purposes, each individual Personnel Accounting System Code is a unit.

Work Backlog—A documented progressive growth in backlog which exceeds the past average workload levels.

Work-Hour Savings—Hours actually saved by reducing or eliminating overtime, or amount of time to complete a task covered by a labor standard.

Attachment 2**ALTERNATE PROCESS****(Semi-Automated)**

1. When to use the Alternate (semi-automated) Process. *NOTE:* Use *only* when access to electronic system is not available, or for the following ideas:

Classified Ideas (Refer to AFI 31-401, *Information Security Program Management*).

During contingency processing (Refer to paragraph **6.3.**)

Ideas with attachments, such as tools, that cannot be transmitted electronically.

Ideas where reporting official or supervisor or the evaluator decline the use of their SSN.

Where connectivity to IPDS does not exist or user has no e-mail address, ideas will be manually submitted to the MO office and, if appropriate, will be input to IPDS and the process will be completed electronically. All policies and procedures stated in this instruction apply, regardless of whether the idea is processed manually or electronically.

2. Submitting Ideas.

2.1. All ideas will be submitted to the base-level MO office via hard copy format. The MO representative will either enter the submission information into IPDS, or assist the submitter in doing so. The following unique ideas require type-specific handling as follows:

2.2. Group or Team Ideas. The primary submitter manually completes and submits the AF Form 1000, ensuring each co-submitter is listed. In addition, the primary submitter receives idea status and apprises co-submitters as idea status changes. See paragraph **3.7.**

2.3. Classified ideas will be handled by inputting the personal information of the submitter into IPDS. The contents of the idea file will remain sealed and forwarded for required evaluation.

Attachment 3**SUBJECT IDENTIFIERS**

Subject Identifier. First-level evaluators assign a subject identifier associated with the idea by reviewing the drop down box of the Subject Identifier available on the Evaluation Screen of IPDS and choosing the appropriate identifier. Each subsequent evaluator is responsible for either verifying the initial determination or assigning a new subject identifier. All subject identifiers will remain for cross-reference identification in the IDEA Pool.

1. CLASSIFIED**2. ENERGY****3. QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY - Examples include but are not limited to the following:****FASCAP/PIF****FASTRACK****GOLD FLAG****IDEA****LOGISTICS EXCELLENCE****QUALITY CIRCLES****VALUE ENGINEERING****ZOP****4. EDUCATION/TRAINING****5. FACILITIES****6. MAINTENANCE****7. MEDICAL****8. OTHER (SPECIFY)****9. OUTSOURCING/PRIVATIZATION****10. QUALITY OF LIFE****11. SAFETY****12. SEPARATE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS****13. UNIFORMS****14. WEAPONS/WEAPON SYSTEMS**

Attachment 4**SUBJECT AREAS**

Subject Areas. First-level evaluators assign a subject area associated with the idea by reviewing the drop down box of the Subject Area available on the Evaluation Screen of IPDS and choosing the appropriate area. Each subsequent evaluator is responsible for either verifying the initial determination or assigning a new subject area. All subject areas will remain for cross-reference identification in the IDEA Pool.

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE**AIRCREW OPERATIONS****AIRCREW PROTECTION****CHAPLAIN SERVICE****CIVIL ENGINEERING****COMMAND CONTROL SYSTEMS OPS****COMMISSARY SERVICES****COMMUNICATIONS-COMPUTER SYSTEMS****COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS SYSTEMS****CONTRACTING****DENTAL****FINANCIAL****FUELS****HISTORIAN****INTELLIGENCE****MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT****MANPOWER****MARINE****MEDICAL****MISSILE/SPACE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE****MISSION SUPPORT****MORALE, WELFARE, AND RECREATION****MUNITIONS/WEAPONS****PARALEGAL****PRECISION MEASUREMENT****PRINTING MANAGEMENT**

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAFETY

SECURITY POLICE

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

SUPPLY

TRANSPORTATION

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

VISUAL INFORMATION

WEATHER

Attachment 5**AWARD CRITERIA*****AIR FORCE EXCEPTIONAL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD*****1.0 Impact on Mission**

40 total points

Objective: Recognize individuals or groups who have enhanced mission capability, improved operational performance, and achieved sustained results. 1 October through 30 September of previous fiscal year.

1.1. Improvement Effort Results. (15)

Describe and define previous and current method.

1.2. Impact of Results. (15)

What impact did this idea(s) have on mission accomplishment? (Include any METs impacted by nominee's idea.)

1.3. Highest Level of Applicability. (10)

Base Level (2)

MAJCOM Level (5)

Air Force Level or Higher (10)

2.0 Tangible Savings

25 total points

Objective: Recognize individuals or groups that produced validated tangible savings.

2.1. Dollars Saved. (15)

Less than \$1M (5)

\$1M to \$5M (10)

Greater than \$5M (15)

2.2. Highest Level of Applicability. (10)

Base Level (2)

MAJCOM Level (5)

Air Force Level or Higher (10)

3.0 Intangible Benefits

25 total points

Objective: Recognize individuals or groups whose achievements produced a positive effect on operations, procedures, health, safety, welfare, and morale.

3.1. Impact on Operations and Procedures. (5)**3.2. Impact on Health and Safety. (5)**

3.3. **Impact on Welfare and Morale. (5)**

3.4. **Highest Level of Applicability. (10)**

Base Level (2)

MAJCOM Level (5)

Air Force Level or Higher (10)

4.0 Number of IDEAs Approved

10 total points

Objective: Recognize individuals or groups who demonstrate continual improvement by enhancing multiple processes.

4.1. Award one point per approved IDEA, not to exceed 10 points.

TOTAL

100 points

Attachment 6

AWARD TEMPLATE

NOMINATION FOR AIR FORCE EXCEPTIONAL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FYXX

NAME/GRADE/DUTY TITLE:

LOCATION: (Complete Organizational Mailing Address)

IMPACT ON MISSION: (Narrative format)

Improvement Effort Results

Impact of Results

Highest Level of Applicability: (Base, MAJCOM, Air Force, or higher)

TANGIBLE SAVINGS: (Bullet format)

Dollars Saved:

Highest Level of Applicability: (Base, MAJCOM, Air Force, or higher)

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS: (Narrative format)

Impact on Operations & Procedures

Impact on Health & Safety

Impact on Welfare & Morale

Highest Level of Applicability: (Base, MAJCOM, Air Force or higher)

NUMBER OF APPROVED IDEAS:

Attachment 7

JOB RESPONSIBILITY DETERMINATION STATEMENT

(Use for Alternate (Semi-Automated) Process Only)

Privacy Act Statement:

Authority: 10 USC 8013; Executive Order 9397

Purpose: The social security number is needed to positively identify the individual.

Disclosure is Voluntary.

Idea #: _____

Submitter: _____

Job Responsibility Determination Statement

- a. If a submitter, without approval of higher authority (including the reporting official or supervisor) can implement an idea, the action is considered to be within job responsibility.**
- b. If the submitter’s primary responsibility is to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be within job responsibility. If in doubt, check the submitter’s position description, enlisted performance report or officer performance report for verification.**
- c. If an idea is developed by a team or group and can be implemented without approval of higher authority, or if the team has been officially chartered, in writing, to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be within job responsibility.**
- d. As a general rule, if not addressed above, ideas from base level that must be approved and implemented at command or higher level normally are not job responsibility. The same rationale applies for command personnel when approval authority is at Headquarters Air Force or higher.**
- e. All other ideas are considered to be outside job responsibility.**

One of the following statements must be selected:

_____ **This idea has been determined to be within job responsibility.**

_____ **This idea has been determined to be outside job responsibility.**

{First Level of Supervision, Telephone #, Date}

{Typed Name of Supervisor}

Supervisor’s SSN